

SOUTH CAROLINA HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

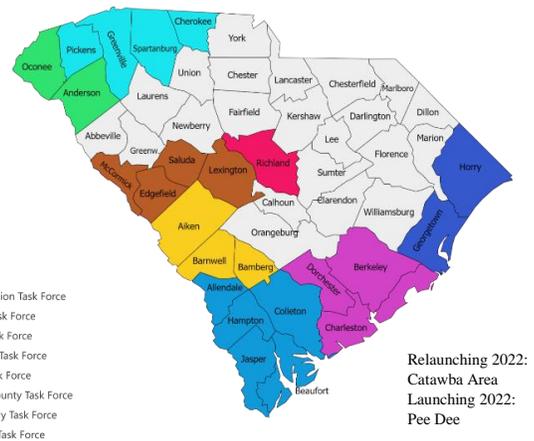
The State Task Force was legislatively mandated in 2012 under S.C. Code Ann. 16-3-2050 (B)(1). It leads a strategic, multi-disciplinary approach to combat human trafficking in South Carolina. The collaborative approach includes efforts from mandated and non-mandated state agencies, state and federal law enforcement, nonprofits, faith leaders, community volunteers, professionals in medicine and education, and survivors. The law dictates that the Task Force will submit annual reports, inclusive of findings and recommendations, to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate. This document summarizes the Task Force's key findings in the 2021 Annual Report. (HumanTrafficking.scag.gov/data-reports)

STATE TASK FORCE RESPONSE

In 2021, the State Task Force made modifications to the existing subcommittee structures to align with the Strategic Response Model. The model ensures that state-level efforts are best coordinated to benefit the multiple sectors working to prevent and respond to human trafficking in South Carolina. While three subcommittees are still being restructured, the Task Force aims to finalize changes in early 2022 with the assistance of the newly onboarded Human Trafficking Program Coordinator. Additionally, the Advisory Council will continue to leverage subject matter experts to provide input on anti-human trafficking initiatives in South Carolina.

REGIONAL TASK FORCES

The State Task Force encourages the development of regional task forces across the state of South Carolina to ensure that every region of the state is equipped with resources and infrastructure necessary to effectively combat human trafficking. In 2021, there were nine regional task forces in South Carolina. The Catawba Area Task Force will relaunch and the Pee Dee Task Force will be launched in early 2022. Currently, 24 of 46 counties in South Carolina are represented by a regional task force.



DETERMINING THE MAGNITUDE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

In order for the Task Force to respond effectively to human trafficking throughout the state of South Carolina, it is critical to understand the extent and scope of human trafficking in our state. Through the State Task Force's ongoing partnership with the National Human Trafficking Hotline, the Task Force receives state specific data. Given the complexities of maintaining and ensuring clean data, the National Human Trafficking Hotline provided 2020 statistics pertaining to human trafficking in South Carolina. The statistics provided do not represent a comprehensive report of trafficking cases in South Carolina throughout that period. They represent signals and cases made to the Hotline during that specific time period. The National Human Trafficking Hotline reported the top counties for reported human trafficking to be Horry County, Richland County, Greenville County, Charleston County, Spartanburg County, Anderson County, York County, Dorchester County, and Greenwood County.

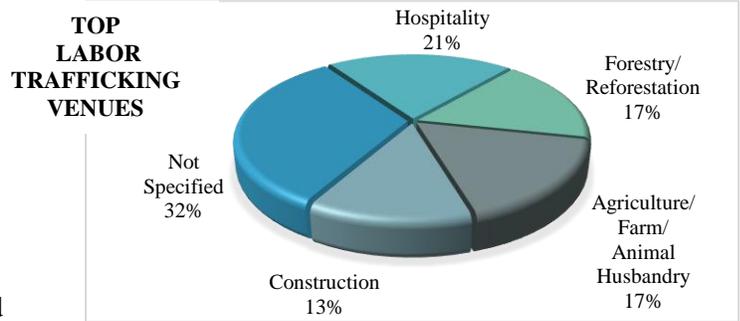
COURT DATA: PENDING AND CLOSED

In 2021, 18 different defendants have charges for human trafficking, some with more than one charge, totaling 52 charges of human trafficking in the South Carolina State Courts. One defendant pled guilty in 2021 to three charges of human trafficking and was sentenced to nine years in prison, while 19 charges were dismissed in exchange for a plea. A total of 31 cases were closed in 2021, 28 were dismissals. Of the 28 dismissals, all but four are related to guilty pleas on related charges. Only six new charges were brought in 2021; yet, with the reopening of the court system and jury trials starting to

happen more regularly, we should see a lot more movement with the pending cases. The current cases still primarily reflect sex trafficking, but labor trafficking is beginning to be reported and recognized more in investigations.

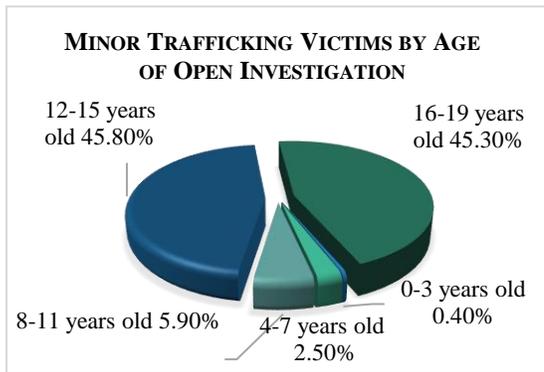
LABOR TRAFFICKING INITIATIVE

Nationwide, labor trafficking is an under discussed and underreported form of human trafficking. The data from the National Hotline reflect a growing need to address labor trafficking in South Carolina. In 2021, the Labor Trafficking Subcommittee created and launched a publicly accessible webinar training on labor trafficking, developed labor trafficking public awareness campaigns, implemented sector-specific labor trafficking trainings, and increased the collection of labor trafficking data. The Task Force vowed to bolster public awareness and engagement in 2021, and will continue to emphasize the critical need to address labor trafficking in 2022.



TRAFFICKING OF MINORS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

In 2018, legislation passed in South Carolina that changed the definition of abuse and neglect to include minor victims of human trafficking. This resulted in DSS being positioned to provide services to minor victims of human trafficking regardless of whether or not a parent or guardian was the perpetrator.



Since the passage of the legislation, DSS has developed a screening tool to help staff in identifying and responding to minor victims of this crime. Between January 1st and December 1st of 2021, there were **236** children identified by DSS as victims of human trafficking. Out of these 236 victims, 207 victims were female and 29 were male with 97% of all cases being victims of sex trafficking. In South Carolina, there are currently two residential facilities that house minor female victims with only one of these facilities being operable due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are current efforts underway to encourage the legislature to dedicate funding towards establishing Acute Care and Resource Centers across South Carolina for minor victims of human trafficking.

PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force hired a Human Trafficking Program Coordinator that will be positioned to consistently offer prevention education to middle and high schools and disseminate innovative anti-trafficking training and awareness materials. As there is currently no mandate that requires basic information on sex trafficking be shared with students, all middle and high school prevention trainings will be done at the request of the schools. The Task Force will also be offering such opportunities to youth serving agencies across the state.

